

File Code: 3400

Date: September 10, 1997

Subject: Dutch Elm Disease Meeting Trip Report

To: Dan Twardus  
Noel Schneeberger  
Gracie Joy

On September 2, Al Iskra and I met with Jim Sherald and Jil Swearingen from the National Park Service to discuss the Dutch elm disease (DED) problem on NPS lands in the National Capitol area. Listed below are my notes from the meeting and some thoughts we kicked around on how Forest Health Protection might help.

Until recently, Jim Sherald and the staff at the Center for Urban Ecology had a successful DED management program that kept the rate of infection down to 1% or less per year. Due to the recent reorganization and personnel cutbacks however, the program has since deteriorated to the point where the rate of infection has started to increase and is now over 2% a year. Jim sees this as only the beginning.

The NPS currently has about 2500 elm trees that are under their management. As of 1997, 56 of these trees are infected. They had to remove 4 elms this year near the reflecting pool. All 2500 elms are tagged and their histories recorded on GIS. Records on tissue cultures are maintained and date back to 1942.

Apparently the DC Department of Public Works Tree Division is also having problems managing an adequate DED program. Jim believes that the District lacks both the people and money to effectively keep up with the rate of infection and have fallen behind on their disease sanitation work.

The NPS will be submitting a proposal to us requesting about \$20,000 in FY98 to support their DED program. The money will primarily fund a temporary position dedicated to surveying the elms, identifying the disease by lab cultures and symptoms, and working with the tree maintenance folks in keeping up with the required pruning and removal of infected trees.

There is a ~~Save-the-Elms task force that exists~~ which includes the District of Columbia, NPS, GSA, DOD, Architect of the Capitol and the Smithsonian Institute. These agencies have a Memorandum of Agreement to support the elm management tactics that were developed for the National Capitol area.

I'm planning to meet with Bill Beck and Sandra Hill from the DC Department of Public Works to discuss how the USDA Forest Service might be able to help.

If we can help the District "catch up" through means of financial support and technical assistance for a few years, the NPS (my primary interest) would

benefit by reducing the overall source of the disease inoculum. I think this "fits" the spirit of the DC Initiative and the elm management tactics as a preventative treatment could be funded by using Cooperative Suppression dollars.

I'll keep you posted.

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cc: Al Iskra

BPO/blm